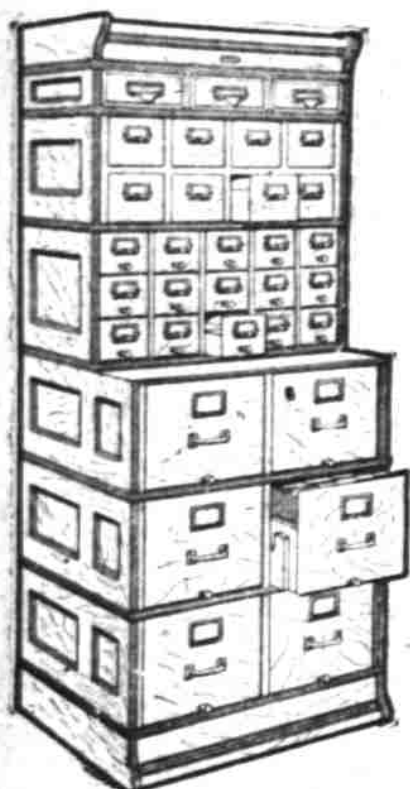


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## OCEAN'S BOTTOM TRAVELED BY NEWSPAPERMAN, WHO GIVES A GRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF TRIP

[By Latest Mail]

SYDNEY, N. S. W.—A clumsy, floundering helplessness, surrounded by intense silence—that is one's first impression, half-standing, half-floating, on the rocky bottom of the harbor. Nothing to see, no wavy green submarine forests, because of the fine mist that rises as your leaden feet disturb the silt. Just heavy, oppressive silence and an expanse of brown water on the other side of your helmet-glass, and a few vague shapes of rocks. One might also be a disembodied creature, held down not very strongly to the surface of a different world. One's only connection with upper air and ordinary things is a thin line and a rubber tube, that lead up ever so far—you would not think it was only a few fathoms—to a windlass and some men in a punt off Parbury's wharf, Dawes Point.

And then the other diver pulls your sleeve—a grotesque submarine figure, like a lobster upended, bubbling at the head—and you give the "all right" signal, and your tour of exploration begins.

An under-water trip was made by a member of the Daily Telegraph in company with an old hand at the diving game, who good-naturedly looked after the new chum. A second old hand lent his diving dress, and several others acted as valets to the submarine debutant. The punt from which a descent was made is only about twenty yards from the shore, along which and the neighboring wharves the channel is being deepened by blasting. As a result, the water is not very transparent, but the trip in itself, apart from anything in the way of scenery, is queer enough and interesting enough for any inhabitant of the upper world. The greatest depth reached was just under 40 feet.

Preparations for the trip are elaborate. You begin by taking off your hat and coat and shoes and rolling up your sleeves. That ends the undressing; then comes the ponderous dressing up. First a heavy blanket-like skirt slipped on over your waistcoat, and then you tuck your trousers into your socks, and sit down, like some old French monarch in his dressing room, to be valeted. First, a great pair of woollen trousers, ending in foot-coverings, and nearly big enough for a baby elephant, and after them trousers of canvas. Next, "stockings" tied above the knee with rope, and then a great pair of metal sabots, weighing about 30lb. between them.

"If I didn't fix these tight enough," said the man who was buckling their straps, "and they came off, you'd be up again like a cork, feet first."

"Now soap your hands," someone says. When your hands and wrists are slippery with soap, a canvas coat goes on, with rubber wrist-rings, that fit tight, to keep the water out, leaving your hands bare. And then comes the corselet, a great metal chest piece, and on top of that the helmet, while you repeat again the signals, to be sure of escaping either comedy or tragedy in this descent. "Two tugs and a lot of little ones for 'all right,' one tug for 'stop,' and four for 'pull me up'—have I got them?" And you stand up, ponderously, carrying on head and feet and shoulders nearly a hundred pounds of metal. "Now," says one of the old hands, "remember, if the pressure is too much for you, just stop a while and put your head back, and draw the air through your nose, so; and you'll be all right. When you come up again, step around the ladder this way, so you won't foul your lines." And then the glass frontpiece is screwed in.

You labor round to the ladder and get your feet on the first rung, and go gradually down, repeating those signals in your mind, and by no means forgetting the "pull up" signal, just in case.

You are so heavy, you can hardly move. But in a few moments you are waist deep in the water—it is hardly cold—and some of the weight is gone. Now the water is above your head. You travel down so slowly, and your mind is so set on not letting foot or hand slip, and remembering those signals, that the descent lasts a long while, though it is not deep. By and by, however, your forehead feels heavy, and your ears oppressed. You bend your head back—though that is rather difficult in that stiff diver's dress—and sniff as directed. There is a little crackling sound in your ears. The tightness round your forehead increases to a heavy headache, and you give the rope the single tug for a stop. A few moments, and your head is right again, and you go on down. Now the helmet of the other diver looms up, at the ladder's end, a stream of bubbles escaping from his nostrils, in silvery upward-flowing strings. He grabs your hand, and gives the "all right" signal, by way of query, and when you have repeated it for answer, he gives the same signal on your line to those above. And now that headache comes on again, and you ask for a stop, while the compression round your temples gradually tightens, standing unsteadily, trying to make out shapes in the vague depths.

That under water journey was almost indescribably vague, interesting far more by reason of the out of the dream-world feeling, than by reason of anything beyond the common actually seen. In fact, almost the only scenery was psychological. The feeling of utter helplessness was extraordinary. One's body had no weight; one's feet and hands were of little use. Towed, more or less, by the other diver, up rocks and down steep slopes, along the uneven, slippery bottom of the sea, floundering in clumsy effort, with the indifferent drunken legs that moved feebly and fruitlessly in false directions, and an unwieldy

body, that somehow lagged back, almost overbalancing, behind them, progress was as uncertain and indefinite as the seascape—if it should be called that—round about. One felt like an egg in a basin of water, or a drunken duckling tugged along by a string. The helmet glass did not blur at all—one of the men had dipped it in salt water to prevent blurring—so that the diver who did the guiding or towing, with his queer goggle-eyes and strings of bubbles, was clearly visible, but there was no seeing more than a few feet beyond him. Every few minutes he would exchange the "all-right" signal with the new chum, and now and then, half-way down some descent, the latter would call a halt, till his head cleared. There was no possibility of independent exploration; all one could do was to struggle blindly—but not too fiercely, for fear of fouling life-lines, or causing some other breakage—to force rebellious legs and body forward in somewhere near the direction the old hand seemed to want.

There was no sense of direction—just a feeble, clumsy but distinctly interesting and rather exciting struggle along in the dead silence. Yet suddenly, it appeared that it was not dead silence after all. The continual sound of the rushing air through the pipe far above, unnoticed at first in the excitement of descent, now floated up from the back of the brain, soon to be forgotten once more. As distance increased from the place of descent, the water cleared a little; the face of rock along which the blasting had been carried out showed up fairly clear, and some dim sandstone boulders. Fine floating particles, drifted across the helmet glass, and then, on a further descent, with slippery feet, up poured a brownish cloud of silt, rolling over the rock surface like a dirty mountain mist. The "leading diver" dragged the other's hand down—efforts at self-immersion did not seem to make much difference—until it was holding something like a bar of metal; this was, in fact, a pick. A stroke or two were remarkably ineffectual, and it was explained afterwards that the pick was used more for pulling out stone that had been loosened by the blasting, than for actual pick work.

Finally, another slippery, indefinite journey, which must have tended back on the first tracks, for the next of the constant signals from the guide consisted, not of the "all right" question, but of the four jerks for "pull up." The new chum repeated this on his own line, and in a few seconds felt the sea bottom drop beneath his feet. Progress up was slow again, because of the changing air pressures that one had to grow used to, but it was not long before enormous weight began to settle again on shoulders and climbing feet as the water was left beneath. And now, a few unsteady steps, and the unscrewing of the helmet glass.

"Not so bad, for a new hand," said the other diver, smoking with his helmet off. "Well, I must be getting back to work."

A look back, he was climbing heavily down the ladder again, while the men at the capstan let out his line and tube.

## PROSPECTS OF THE AMERICAN COTTON OIL CO.

[By Latest Mail]

NEW YORK—American Cotton Oil's fiscal year, which ends with August, is expected to show nothing startling in earnings. Last year's balance for the common was equivalent to 3.3 per cent, and it is estimated this year's earnings will run very close to last year's, possibly slightly less.

The 1913 cotton crop, while satisfactory as to tonnage of cotton seed, was disappointing as regards quality. Hence cotton oil prices have ruled higher than for last year with consequent deterrent effect upon demand. Competition of lower grade oils cut heavily into business abroad and trade conditions in this country also retarded demand. The business in soaps and trade-marked brands has been very satisfactory.

In view of the fact that company is embarked upon an extensive program of upbuilding of its plants it is not thought likely that there will be any distribution on the common stock this year. American Cotton Oil is spending \$1,000,000 on a new plant at Bayonne, N. J., which it proposes to finance out of earnings. The conservative policy, therefore, would be to conserve the company's quick assets, to which policy the present management is committed.

Returns made to its cotton bureau so far this year lead the management to take a somewhat more optimistic view of the 1914 cotton crop outlook than is generally held.

## POTATO ACREAGE HIGHER.

[By Latest Mail]

PORTLAND, Ore.—Prospective potato acreage for four far western states is estimated as follows: Oregon 60,000, compared with 50,000 in 1913; California 60,000, against 52,000; Washington 58,000 against 51,000; Idaho 34,000 against 29,000.

## CORN GROWS RAPIDLY.

[By Latest Mail]

CEDAR RAPIDS, Ia.—According to a despatch from the Gazette from Waterloo, Iowa, the corn on the Willow Lawn farm when 49 days old was 4 1/2 feet high on an average and some of it reached six feet.

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## WILL NOT NEED ASSISTANCE OF THE TREASURY

[By Latest Mail]

MINNEAPOLIS.—President Decker of Northwestern National Bank, referring to treasury inquiry sent to national banks as to deposits of government money this fall for crop moving purposes said that Minneapolis probably will not need any.

"Unless conditions change greatly," Mr. Decker said, "there will be no greater need for government deposits in the Northwest this year than there was last fall when Washington put out some \$7,000,000, none of which came here. Minneapolis, St. Paul and

Duluth were at that time allotted various sums in the Washington distribution plan, but these cities did not call for any.

"There will be a big crop, from all indications, and money is plentiful. Also the prices for grains are lower, which makes some difference in the volume of money necessary to finance the crop movement. Unless some unforeseen change develops, this part of the country will get along without any treasury department assistance."

## KANSAS WHEAT ESTIMATED.

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—The wheat crop of Kansas is estimated at 180,000,000 bushels by the Times. Many of the fields yield 30 to 35 bushels an acre.

## WASHINGTON MAY TAKE UP POWDER MAKING BUSINESS

[By Latest Mail]

PORTLAND, Ore.—The state of Washington may engage in the business of powder manufacturing, utilizing for this purpose a provisional \$50,000 appropriation made by the last legislature, and selling the powder at cost to farmers and others for land clearings, under the report of a special committee, named by Governor Lister to investigate the advisability of the scheme, says a dispatch from Olympia to the Oregonian.

The committee, which has just rendered its report to the Governor finds

that a state factory capable of turning out 10 tons of 20 per cent nitroglycerin powder (dynamite), could be built for \$12,000, exclusive of the cost of a 40-acre site, preferably on tide water.

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